



beach eats

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Beach baker offers sandwiches to furloughed workers

Victoria Sgro, a classically-trained baker, moves through the kitchen of her Kaihiau's Bakery & Cafe, navigating between her crew, juggling multiple orders at once.

A large table was celebrating a birthday with breakfast out, and the final touches were being put together. It allowed me and my partner, Doug, an opportunity to look over the menu board. A mushroom and kale omelette, served with a side of tots. Biscuits and gravy. A breakfast burrito with a southwest twist. Waffles topped with housemade pineapple compote. A bagel sandwich, and a waffle sand-

wich.

My choice was the waffle sandwich, and Doug picked the burrito. Victoria chatted with us as she rang up the order. I asked about her recent offer to feed employees affected with the government shutdown.

"I know it is hard to not be working and making money, or working and not getting paid," she said, also asking if I wanted the maple syrup for my sandwich on the side. Yes, please.

"If I can help out families it is the least I can do. We will be running this until the shutdown is over." Sgro is offering bagel sandwich meals to anyone who is

furloughed out of her own pocket, although she says many of her customers are making donations, too.

We left the counter to grab a seat and some coffee; a rich Hawaiian blend was offered, a nod to the island state that Sgro, a Philadelphia native, called home for many years. In fact, the entire gem-sized dining room reflects her love of the aloha spirit. Kaihiau translates to "give generously from the heart."

In short order, our plates were brought out.

Between two halves of fluffy, light, housemade waffles was a folded egg, a still-sizzling sausage patty, and melting cheese. A

generous side of golden brown tots sat next to it, and maple syrup, ketchup, and hot sauce was served to me on the side.

On Doug's plate two over-stuffed halves of a grilled tortilla were filled with eggs, bacon and avocado, held together with creamy, rich queso. We took bites of our respective dishes and let out a sigh of satisfaction at almost the same time.

I'm an omnivore; I will eat just about anything except mayonnaise, which I had a nasty run-in with in August 1970. The fact that both of our dishes, indeed everything on the menu and in the bakery case, are vegan bothered me not one bit. Good food is good food, and this was excellent.

Sgro blends her love of protecting animals with her experience of working in top kitchens in both Philly and Hawaii. She pushes no agenda except eating well, telling me that no one should compromise good taste.

It showed in the breakfast. My waffle was perfect,



PATRICK EVANS-HYLTON /FOR THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

Kaihiau's Bakery & Cafe's chef/owner Victoria Sgro, showcases a waffle sandwich and breakfast burrito in the kitchen of her vegan restaurant. Sgro is also offering meals to employees affected by the government shutdown, and plans fine dining pop-ups in 2019.

and the sausage, despite the fact there was no pork, was meaty and seasoned wonderfully with sage and other spices. The egg-substitute was billowy, and the melting vegan cheese – cheese if you please – had creamy and slightly sharp notes like that of cheddar made with cow's milk.

Ditto on the delish for the tots, too.

Almost before I could get a bite of Doug's order, he had downed most of it. It was delightful too and like so many delicious southwest breakfast burritos in the past. Sgro brought out some sweets at the end: a chewy brownie crafted from figs, and a rich chocolate mousse filled in an edible chocolate cup. I licked the plate; don't judge me.

Kaihiau's is open for breakfast and up until dinner time. A case has many grab-and-go items for dinner.

And speaking of dinner, look for Sgro offering a series of pop-ups including a fine-dining setting with lower lights, white-linen on tabletops, soft music, and screens to block the open kitchen. I'll keep you informed as her plans play out.

Kaihiau's is at 3712 S. Plaza Trail. Call 757-340-0071 or visit www.Kaihiaus.com.

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